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Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II)

Rapporteur: Mr. Djamel MOKTEFI (Algeria)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The previous recommendation made by the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly under agenda item 119 appears in the report of the Committee contained in document A/52/734.

2. The Fifth Committee resumed its consideration of the item at its 53rd, 54th and 57th to 59th meetings, on 19 and 20 and from 25 to 27 March 1998. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's further consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/52/SR.53, 54 and 57-59).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on measures to ensure the necessary resources for the upgrading of conference rooms and interpretation booths (A/52/829). It also discussed a number of issues under this agenda item, relating to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6, and 52/214 B, paragraphs 24 and 25, the quality of press releases and the standardization of geographical names.

4. At the 59th meeting, on 27 March, the Chairman made a statement on the question of improving the quality of press releases and reaffirmed the assurance given by the Department of Public Information at the 54th meeting, on 20 March, that, owing to the technical and political nature of issues discussed in the Fifth Committee, regular and more permanent press officers would be assigned to cover its meetings.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT PROPOSALS

A. Draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26

5. At the 57th meeting, on 25 March, the representative of Indonesia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) introduced a draft decision entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6" (A/C.5/52/L.26).

6. At the 58th meeting, on 26 March, the representative of Indonesia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) requested that the Committee consider and take a decision on draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26.

7. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America proposed to amend draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26 by replacing it with the following text:

> "The General Assembly, reiterating its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997, decides that the United Nations official holidays shall be maintained at nine days, and requests the Secretary-General to take into account, inter alia, the local customs and practices of the United Nations headquarters and other duty stations when determining the calendar of officially observed holidays."

8. Also at the same meeting, following a procedural debate, in which the representatives of Indonesia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Qatar, the United States of America, the Sudan, Pakistan, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Mexico, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Japan, Poland, Latvia, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Cuba, Côte d'Ivoire and Egypt and the Chairman and the Secretary of the Committee participated, the representative of Canada moved the adjournment of the debate under rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (see A/C.5/52/SR.58).

9. The Committee rejected the motion by 46 votes to 31.

10. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America proposed to amend draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26 by replacing the words "at ten days, in order to observe the two holidays of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha at the United Nations headquarters and other United Nations duty stations" with the words "at nine days and to observe the two holidays referred to in General Assembly resolution 52/214, section A, paragraphs 5 and 6, at the United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations duty stations, as appropriate".

11. Following a procedural debate, in which the representatives of Pakistan, Indonesia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Côte d'Ivoire, the Sudan, Egypt, the United States of America and Canada participated, the Committee proceeded to vote on the amendment proposed by the representative of the United States of

America in accordance with rule 130 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

12. The Committee rejected the amendment by a recorded vote of 44 to 28, with 7 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe.

Abstentions: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ukraine, Uruguay.

13. Also at the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America requested that draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26 be put to a vote.

14. The Committee then proceeded to vote on draft decision A/C.5/52/L.26, which was adopted by 54 to 25, with 2 abstentions (see para. 20, draft decision I). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstentions: New Zealand, Ukraine.

15. Statements in explanation of position were made by the representatives of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, the United States of America and Latvia. Statements were also made by the representatives of Indonesia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Mexico, the Syrian Arab Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea, Argentina, the Sudan and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

B. Draft decisions proposed by the Chairman

1. Upgrading of conference rooms and interpretations booths

16. At the 59th meeting, on 27 March, the Chairman orally proposed a draft decision entitled "Upgrading of conference rooms and interpretation booths", following informal consultations, which the Committee adopted without a vote (see para. 20, draft decision II).

2. Documentation related to the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

17. At the 59th meeting, on 27 March, the Chairman orally proposed a draft decision entitled "Documentation related to the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names", submitted following informal consultations, which the Committee adopted without a vote (see para. 20, draft decision III).

18. After the adoption of the draft decision, a statement in explanation of position was made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic (see A/C.5/52/SR.59).

3. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 B, paragraphs 24 and 25

19. At the 59th meeting, on 27 March, the Chairman orally proposed a draft decision entitled "Implementation of resolution 52/214 B, paragraphs 24 and 25", following informal consultations, which the Committee adopted without a vote (see para. 20, draft decision IV).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

20. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decisions:

DRAFT DECISION I

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 A, paragraphs 5 and 6

The General Assembly, reiterating its resolution 52/214 A of 22 December 1997, decides that the United Nations official holidays shall be set at ten days, in order to observe the two holidays of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha at the United Nations headquarters and other United Nations duty stations.

DRAFT DECISION II

Upgrading of conference rooms and interpretation booths

The General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the upgrading of conference rooms and interpretation booths.[1]

DRAFT DECISION III

Documentation related to the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

The General Assembly decides, without prejudice to the relevant rules of procedure governing the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, that the documents related to that Conference which are issued by the Secretariat should be translated into the six official languages.

DRAFT DECISION IV

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/214 B, paragraphs 24 and 25

The General Assembly notes that documents are not being submitted as required under paragraphs 24 and 25 of its resolution 52/214 B of 22 December 1997, and emphasizes that the provisions of those paragraphs should be fully implemented.

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[1] A/52/829.